(c) Difference between Economic Cost and the Central Issue Price is paid to the FCI as consumer subsidy. Therefore the consumers are benefited to the extent to which they draw/get these foodgrains through P.D.S./ R.P.D.S. as such supplies are made at Central Issue Price which is lower than the Economic Cost.

[English]

Shifting of Polluting Industrial Units

1645. SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of industrial units in major cities have been issued notices for shifting locations by the respective State Pollution Boards;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the details of such units shifted during the last three years; and

(d) the time bound action plan formulated for shifting of the polluting industrial units ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Afforestation

1646. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have issued any directives to the State Governments to check cutting of the trees;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have also reviewed the afforestation programme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Union Government has directed to States and Union Territories, where forest cover has declined, to make an indepth analysis of factors contributing to depletion of forest cover and make all out efforts to step up afforestation programmes.

(c) and (d) National Afforestation and Eco-development Board (NAEB) within the Ministry of Environment and Forests is the nodal agency to allocate annual targets for afforestation and tree planting activities under the 20-Point Programme to each State and Union Territory on the basis of funds available. The annual achievements are monitored and reviewed by the NAEB as under:

(i) The annual afforestation data provided by the States/UTs are kept in the library of the Parliament and the Ministry of Environment and Forests to enable elected representatives to have a ready access to the data.

(ii) Every year 10% of the districts in the Country are selected, with appropriate regional distribution, for evaluation of the afforestation activities by autonomous institutions/NGOs/voluntary agencies/ regional centres of NAEB/retired forest officials.

Smuggling of Explosive Material

1647 SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the explosive material was smuggled into the country from the ports and airports;

(b) if not, the ways and means of its entry into the country; and

(c) the concrete steps taken by the Government to prevent the smuggling of the explosive material into the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (c) Recently there have been instances wherein arms, ammunition, explosives etc., were smuggled into the country mainly through international borders. Government is alive to the situation created by antinational elements and is taking all necessary steps to thwart the evil designs of such forces, which includes gearing up of intelligence machinery, stricter enforcement of existing regulations and close coordination between the concerned Central and State agencies.

Cutting of Trees in Madhya Pradesh

1648. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR :
SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) Whether the Government are aware that trees worth lakhs of rupees have been cut down in Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh in connivance with the Government officials;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the estimated value of the trees cut down;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard; and

(d) if so, the findings thereof and the action taken against the guilty persons ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The information is being collected from the State Government.

(c) and (d) The enquiry committee has been constituted by the State Government. The Committee is yet to give its findings.

[English]

Task Force for Redressal of Public Grievances

1649. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the Ministries and Departments of the Union Government have been directed to constitute a task force comprising of officials and representatives from the consumer groups to evolve a comprehensive charter for the redressal of public grievances and improved public satisfaction;

(b) if so, the details of the guidelines issued by the Union Government in this regard;

(c) the present position in regard to the constitution of the task force; and

(d) the time by which the task force is likely to start functioning ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) As part of the Government's pursuit of Effective and Responsive Administration at all levels, various Ministries/Departments have been asked to set up Task Forces for introduction, in a phased manner, of the concept of Citizens' Charter. The Charter incorporates essentially citizens' entitlement to public services, wide publicity of standards of performance, quality of services, access to information, simplified procedures of complaints, time-bound redressal of grievances and provision for independent scrutiny of performance. A number of Ministries/Departments have constituted Task Forces for evolving their respective Charters since January, 1997. Initially, Ministries/ Departments with a large public interface have been identified for introducing the concept. The Task Forces are functioning in many of these Ministries and some of them have completed the task of preparing a Draft Charter. The Charters also incorporate a visible machinery for public grievance redressal and information to the public.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras

1650. DR. ASIM BALA :
SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI :
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE :
SHRI N.J. RATHWA :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the norms fixed by the Government for opening of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country;

(b) the plan chalked out by the Government to open Krishi Vigyan Kendras in each district of the country; and

(c) the expected time limit fixed to achieve the goal ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The norms fixed by the Govt. includes availability of 50 acres of representatives cultivable land in one stretch located as far as possible in central part of the districts, some civic facilities, adequate technical backstopping from the host institution and acceptance of funding pattern.

(b) and (c) A comprehensive plan has been chalked out and taken up with the Planning Commission which covers upgradation of existing Farmers Training Centres and Zonal Research Stations to take up the functions of KVKs, besides establishment of new KVKs in the remaining districts in phases during 9th Five Year Plan.

Forest Protection Force

1651. SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the states facilitated by the Central Government to raise Forest Protection Force;

(b) whether the smugglers are destroying the forests of the North Eastern Regions immensely;

(c) if so, whether the Government of Tripura has submitted a proposal to raise a battalion of the Forest Protection Force; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to accord sanction to the proposal and to protect the forests of the North-Eastern regions ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) A centrally sponsored scheme "Development of Infrastructure for Protection of Forest against Biotic Interference" under Seventh Five Year Plan, had been transferred to state seetor, as per decision taken by the National Development Council. At present, no assistance is provided to States by the Central Government to raise forest protection forces.

(b) The Central Government are aware of the decrease in forest cover in north-eastern region of the Country. As per the State of Forest Report 1995, prepared by the Forest Survey of India, forest cover in north-eastern region decreased by 783 sq. km. as compared with that in 1993. The Union Government has directed to States and Union Territories to make an indepth analysis of factors contributing to depletion of forest cover and make all out efforts to step up afforestation programmes.

(c) Yes, Sir.